Problem-Solving

Module 4

Transition Roundtables November 18 & 19, 2008

Introduction

- Problem-solving skills are those skills that enable a person to identify one or more solutions to a problem
- The process of problem solving is systematic:
- Problem identification
- Problem analysis
- · Problem resolution

Skills needed...

- Students need the ability to recognize and define the problem
- Students need the ability to invent and implement solutions
- Students need the ability to track and evaluate results

Assessing the skills...

- Is the student creative or practical?
- Does the student "follow the pack" or seem to be able to think for him- or herself in terms of fashion, activities, etc?
- Does the student repeat the same solution to problems, even though the solution is not often successful?
- Does the student seem to need others' approval before acting?

Commercial Assessments

- Problem Solving Inventory
 - · Author: P. Paul Heppner
 - http://www.cpp.com/ (search PSI)
- Social Problem-Solving Inventory for Adolescents (SPSI-R)
- Authors: Marianne Frauenknecht and David R. Black
- http://www.mhs.com/mhs/ (search SPSI-R)
- These references are for information only and should not be considered recommended assessments

Strategies to teach problemsolving skills

- > Teach the process:
 - State the problem
 - · List the choices that are available
 - $\,{}_{\circ}$ Identify the consequence of each choice
 - Select the choice that best meets immediate as well as long-term needs

Additional program components

- Decision identification
- Goal definition
- Who should make the decision?
- Where can I get help making the decision?
- What are the alternatives?
- · What are the risks?
- How do I make the final decision?

Methods for problem-solving

- ▶ IDEAL problem solver
- · I = Identify problems and opportunities
- D = \underline{D} efine goals
- \bullet E = Explore possible strategies
- A = Anticipate actions and solve
- L = Look back and learn
- Brainstorming
- Root Cause Analysis (AKA the "Five Why's"
 - · Ask "why" five times
- ▶ Cause and Effect Diagrams

Methods, continued

- Pareto chart
- Frequency distribution showing the relative contribution of contributing problems to the larger problem
- Helps identify where to focus energy to obtain the most impact
- Flowcharting
 - · Map the steps in the process
- Decision Matrix
- Options/alternatives are listed in the left-hand column, with selection criteria listed across top
- Each option is rated against the selection criteria

Handouts:	
- A Problem-Solving Guide	
 IDEAL Problem-Solving Worksheet 	
Pareto Chart	
Activity:	
 Use the IDEAL Problem-Solving Worksheet to work through the following problem: 	
You (the student) have a friend who keeps asking you to go out on a date. Even though your parents allow you to	
date, you don't want to go out with that person.	